RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

JOHN JOSEPH LANE, Major General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 31 March 1909, Revere, Massachusetts

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 36 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 1 April 1969

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED

The Coast Artillery School, Basic and Advanced Course
The Command and General Staff College
The Naval War College
The Industrial College of the Armed Forces

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

United States Military Academy - BS Degree - Engineering
Harvard University - Advanced Management Program

MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

FROM	TO	ASSIGNMENT
Sep 49	Feb 51	Ops Br Chief (Trans), EUCOM
Feb 51	May 52	Org & Equip Br Chief (Gen Staff), EUCOM
Aug 52	Jun 53	Student, Industrial College of the Armed Forces
Jun 53	Nov 54	Chief, Org & Manpower Office, G-4, DA
Nov 54	May 56	Dep Dir of Pers, DCSLOG, DA
Jun 56	Sep 58	Trans Sec Chief, HQ, DA
Sep 58	May 60	A/Chief of Trans, MILOPNS, DA
May 60	Oct 62	Dir of Pers, DCSLOG, DA
Oct 62	Feb 65	CG, Fort Eustis

Feb 65	Mar 69	CG, MTMTS

PROMOTION	**DATE OF APPOINTMENT**
2LT	13 Jun 1933
1LT	14 Jun 1936
CPT	1 Oct 1940
MAJ	17 Apr 1942
LTC	11 Dec 1942
COL	30 Dec 1950
BG	1 Sep 1959
MG	1 Aug 1962

US DECORATIONS AND BADGES

Distinguished Service Medal
Bronze Star w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Army Commendation Medal

SOURCE OF COMMISSION USMA (Class of 1933)

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INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Interview with Major General (Ret) John J. Lane

Major General (Ret) John J. Lane was interviewed on 11 June 1985 by **CPT Robert P. Eicher**. **MG Lane** is a 1933 graduate on the United States Military Academy.

MG Lane discussed the concept of strategic mobility from both historic and current perspectives. He defined strategic ability as the capability to move a force to an objective and sustain it for an indefinite time period. Key factors which need to be evaluated include the size of the force, distance to be moved, physical characteristics of the objective area, and the time table necessary.

He touched on "Operation Overlord" and the attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran as examples to illustrate his points.

MG Lane's assignment as the first commander MTMRS (now MTMC) was discussed as he traced the development of the Army's need for sealift capabilities which led to reliance on commercial ships. Vietnam was used as an example of the need to examine destination ports and their capabilities to offload cargos of different weight and size to determine the nation's strategic nobility capability over all.

The state of the United States' sealift capability, and what needs to be done to improve it, was the last topic of discussion.

INTERVIEW

CPT Eicher: General Lane, what do we mean by strategic mobility?

MG Lane: Captain Eicher, before we get into the substance of a discussion on this subject, I want to say one thing, and that is, that the astute and far-ranging questions that you brought yesterday on the question of strategic mobility were invaluable to me in recalling events and problems with which I was involved twenty years ago. Now, to get back to your question. I suppose the short answer would be the U.S. capability in transportation to move a fighting force to an objective area outside the Continental United States, and sustain that force there on an indefinite basis. Now, critical to any answer on this question, however, is the size of the force. As the size increases, the problems and the elements involved increase geometrically. Of course, time, space, and the objective area are the major variables that are involved. "Overlord," for instance, was an example of a large force. Our time was stretched in order to obtain the desired force levels. We had years of build-up with the combined forces of our Allies. This all occurred in England, prior to the invasion. On the other side of the coin, is Angola (Grenada), as an example of a small operation where time and timing were of the essence. Of course, there we had no requirement for defensive air or defensive naval forces. I might add at this point, however, that it probably would have been a much more efficient operation if we had just dropped in an airborne division or given the job to the Marines. That was a case where the Joint Forces did not help the situation at all.

CPT Eicher: If I might interject something, what time period are we talking about? You said Angola, right? And what time period are we talking about during this Angola campaign?

MG Lane: Well, I'm talking about the whole campaign and what I mean is that we had diversified commands there in an operation where a single command would have been better. You had the Marines, you had the Army, and you had communication problems. You had forces in there which habitually do not train together. If you send a marine

force in, or an airborne force, you send in a complete unit from command all the way down the line to the completion of the operation where communications and so forth are no problem whatsoever. Another example of this same thing is the so-called relief for our prisoners in Tehran. In my opinion, there were just too many people who had not worked together before, from the four services, who were involved in that, whereas one unit, or a small operation, should have unity of command and unity, I think, of service.

CPT Eicher: As you mentioned, from a logistician's point of view, strategic mobility involves putting a force somewhere and sustaining it entirely for a period of time. Have we really been concerned with strategic mobility all the time, or has it become more important more recently, say after World War II with the Soviet threat and the Cold War?

MG Lane: Well, I think that there are a lot of things that have transpired in the last fifty years that have caused this attitude to change, and it has changed, there's no question about it. I think that after World War II, we became the Number 1 nation in the western world and we were very, very slow, after World War II, in assuming our position of importance. It was a long time before we realized that we had world-wide responsibilities which we either could support or just leave to the communist menace. During the same period of time, the world became much smaller. We had tremendous advances in the technology of transportation and communications, which really reduced the size of the world, insofar as reaction time is concerned. Accordingly, what we had to do was, once an adversary took any action, we had to come up with a very fast response, or the action would be completed before we could be effective. Of course, the converse is true, too. If you can ignore the time element, then I think the strategic mobility problem would just vanish because if you have an equation of time and capability that you have to solve, and if you don't have to worry about the element of time, which we didn't have to do previously we set the time as we wanted it. The problem becomes, now, one of having the time and the capability to meet your requirements within that time frame. So, it's a time element that is the principle criteria today.

CPT Eicher: I'll agree. I think especially with the air-land battle concept that's becoming more and more evident. The time frame is shrinking down, at least for the reinforcement theory for Germany. It's certainly shrinking and shrinking. The last I read I think it was down to fifteen days. We need to be able to respond fully and reinforce in fifteen days, and that's quite a chore. I wonder if you could comment on that. What do you think our capabilities are of doing that, in that short period of tire?

MG Lane: I think it would be very difficult. I think you can make an initial reinforcement in that time element, but whether you can sustain it over a long period of time I'm very doubtful. And I think one of your problems is going to be that you have to, also, consider the capabilities of your adversary. Let me tell you, these days it's very hard to get there 'firstest with the mostest," when your competitor is the Soviet Union.

CPT Eicher: In late 1962,, you assumed command of the US Army Transportation Center at Fort Eustis, and my reading tells me that you immediately became involved

with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Can you describe the situation, at that time, and your actions as Commanding General of Fort Eustis? And if you care to comment on any other contingencies that went on prior to that, I wish you would, in Lebanon, for instance; those operations.

MG Lane: As far as the Cuban Missile Crisis was concerned, I think it was a very interesting exercise from the point of view of international diplomacy. There was much political talk and gesturing between the U.S. and the Soviets, and a lot of heat was generated, but there was no change of attitude on either side. That continued until the U.S. Mobilized its capability and moved its troops to our build-up areas in Florida. As soon as we did that, the basic problem was solved because the Soviets recognized our determination to neutralize the effect of missiles in Cuba. I think that the U.S. action there shows the proper use of power during negotiations. I think another thing it shows is that the Soviets only have respect for power, and not words. However, I was not involved in the actual deployment because I arrived at Eustis just as the problem was solved and our troops were on their way back to Fort Eustis. Of course, during that period of time, all the money that was allocated for the build-up had been spent, so my problem then was to get the units back to a favorable state of readiness again, and on a very low budget, I might add. One item that I recall well was we were very short of propeller shafts for the landing craft because they had all been bent going down to Florida through the inland waterways. That became a critical point, but it was solved ultimately. You mentioned Lebanon. I only recall one thing that stuck with me on planning for that one and that was that, as Transportation Officer at CONARC, which was the Continental Army Command at Fort Monroe, I was somewhat involved in the planning and I think that we had nine or ten plans that had been brought in by the various agencies of government and that had to be studied from the logistical point of view, which created a tremendous amount of work. When you start scheduling the movement of a division and all its supporting troops and then change the type division that's going to be moved, because all its supporting troops would be elsewhere in the country; there was an awful lot of just pure drudgery insofar as figuring out the schedules to have an effective deployment. I mention that because there's one thing that made me realize early in the game that this type of planning has to be completely automated.

CPT Eicher: In February of 1965, when you left Fort Eustis, you assumed command of the Military Traffic Management and Terminal Service, and as the first commander of this brand new organization; I understand you were the first commander--what impact did you have on the nation's strategic ability as the commander of MTMTS?

MG Lane: MTMTS was organized just as the build-up for Vietnam started and our first problem was that of integrating the Army's port system. We had three major port areas with the Defense Traffic Management Agency, which had five regions, and integrated with that the cargo import control to aerial ports, which consisted of five aerial ports. To solve that problem we ended up with two area commands to handle both traffic management and port operations. The input control of cargo in the aerial ports, we put into one agency. Instead of having five agencies for shippers to go to for clearance, they

only had to come to one agency. That particular move solved the eternal conflict that's always existed between traffic managers and port operators because we put them both under the one man. As I mentioned, for the input to aerial ports, it saved an awful lot of confusion for our shippers because they had to go to only one agency. They didn't have to decide which aerial port served which area overseas. This one agency took care of all that and simplified that problem. However, we did a lot of other things too, principally to assist the unloading of equipment in the objective area. Of course, our function was to move units, cargo, and personnel to seaports and airports in the United States on a priority basis. We "port-called' all Army personnel (and), to ease the burden of unloading in the Vietnam area as much as possible, and I mention this because at this time we had up to 110 ships waiting in line to be unloaded. The first thing we did was we set up a Vietnam Supply Unit at Oakland which had the authority, from the Pacific Command, to override any priorities going through on the basis that that was what Vietnam needed. We outloaded ships from one port to save the ships standing in line at two or three different ports. This gave them quick turn-around. We changed manifests, ship manifests documentation, from completely automated manifests to those to make sure that all critical items could be read from the manifest in the clear because they didn't have the sophisticated equipment in the objective area to have it done mechanically. Another thing we did was we outloaded priority equipment either on the top of ships or in holds that were easily accessible so that you could have them quickly unloaded as soon as we got to the objective area. I think these things helped from the strategic ability point of view because, again, time and capability were getting to be so important that they expedited the paper-handling of the tremendous loads that were increasing year by year as the war wore on.

CPT Eicher: After a deployment like this, to Vietnam, for instance, a certain amount of this shipping is pushed. I don't know what the proper term would be, but it's not requisitioned actually. You know what they're going to need and you start pushing it to them, and then of course you answer any requests that they have in addition to that. But a lot of the effort is, you already know what it's going to be and you just try to get it there on the time-schedule. Is that correct?

MG Lane: That's right, but the real critical point, as I mentioned, was the unloading, and what we actually did was kept asking them what we could do to help them on the far end. We had the capability here. We had no problems with our commercial transportation system of any magnitude and so our effort was to help the objective area perform their part of the mission and it was just inadequacy of (adequate) ports there for one thing. We built, as you know, quite a port up at Cam Ranh Bay, one of the portable ports, I might add, and port capacity was the problem. With the size (quantity) of the supplies that we were sending out there, they just didn't have the capability of assimilating it either. They also didn't have the capability of storing it properly. Sometimes you'd have duplicates shipped out there because they couldn't find what they had in the supply system.

CPT Eicher: How much of our shipping at that time, to Vietnam, was done in US flag, MSC vessels or, in other words, what was the mix between foreign flag vessels and U.S. of any type?

MG Lane: It was predominantly U.S. flags that we used out there. We used foreign flags when we had to, but that was not a large part of the operation. The U.S. flags pretty much took care of our part. of course, that brings up the question of how much you could use the U.S. flag because if you take a U.S. liner off its regular route for any period of time it loses its favorable position when it comes back again. It has to work into a favorable position.

CPT Eicher: The current requirements, as I understand them, for our contingencies are to be able to go anywhere at any tine in the world and fight a war. From the standpoint of your position in MTMTS, or in the Joint Chiefs of Staff looking at that requirement, how do we as logisticians prepare for a situation like that, where we don't know exactly where we're going and we may go anywhere?

MG Lane: You've got a lot of fundamental things that you have to consider anytime you consider that it's just your basic strategic ability problem. And, of course, it's one of the problems that you have to work backwards because, what you have to do, you have to find out first of all what the objective area is and then what the requirements are for size, of course, and time, and then you go into studying capabilities. I might run through what I think that a logistic planner has to think about. I would think that any logistician that had a problem would have to, first of all, start out by considering what the force deployments are, considering troops and accompanying equipment. That's the essence of the whole operation, but then you also have to consider that if you're going to sustain it you have resupply, you have build-up, and you've got the problem of individual replacements. Now, these things are altering all the time. For instance, the question of individual replacements, in recent years, has become much, much simpler because of the ability of air to move them quickly. I think other things that a planner must include, however, is the question of force, phasing, and scheduling. And this is a lot of drudgery once you know what the force is, and the destination, and you know what the specific units are that are being utilized. Again, I repeat, that this is a place where automation is worth every cent we spend on it. Plus, you also have to consider the transportation capabilities, both those that are military and commercial. You have the problem of supply levels and priorities. I must say the priorities are usually much more reasonable when you look at them on a piece of paper, as opposed to living up to the rules and regulations, and you have to vary them. You have to consider retrograde, or reverse flow, too, because you have the problem of having many items of equipment that are repairable, but not in the objective area, that have to be sent elsewhere for repair. You must have a feel for the complete utilization of the commercial capability that we have in this country keeping in mind all the time that you have the problem of ensuring that the commercial part of the United States has the ability to perform its mission of producing the many, many things that we do need, and permitting people to go where they have to go to perform those missions. And never forget alternate plans because as soon as you solve one plan the next day, as I mentioned in the Lebanon case, you're going to have

another plan that you have to solve, and so on. Then, of course, any operation starts out with assumptions over which the planner, necessarily, doesn't have control. We've got the readiness status of the units. In some cases, they have to be one hundred percent ready when they land. In other cases, you may be able to give them a training period before you put them into the operations. You've got the weather and destination in the initial phases of the move. Then, there are emergency actions that you have to make an assumption about, particularly if you're going into a hostile environment. And, so far as air support is concerned, our logistic support from the air, there's the concern of overflight restrictions over nations that sometimes are friendly to us. This becomes a real problem. If you take all that list I just mentioned and put them into one plan, I think that it won't take very long to realize that you need a lot of help. Something that would take hours and hours of pure drudgery can be done, actually, in the order of minutes, if you have the proper automation. I think it'd be a good trick to get all this completely automated, and it'll take a lot of money, but I think it will be well worth the effort.

CPT Eicher: General Lane, what part do the Military Airlift Command, the Military Sealift Command, and the Military Traffic Management Command, which you commanded as the Military Traffic Management and Terminal Service in 1965, what part do they play in this strategic deployment, and who controls the overall responsibilities of those three assets?

MG Lane: Of course, the three units are single managers or, rather, they work for single managers. The single managers are actually the secretaries of each department. The unit commanders are executive directors. MTMTS, what is now MTMC, in addition to being a single manager working for the Secretary of the Army, is also a major subordinate commander of the Chiefs of Staff. He has a dual role there. Insofar as the utilization of resources is concerned, that's wholly a Joint Chiefs of Staff function. Although we didn't have the problem during the build-up in Vietnam, during a large emergency you would have the allocation of resources, which would be the function of the Joint Transportation Board, which would then reallocate those resources to the three single managers who would carry out the missions that were dictated. Of course, insofar as MTMTS was concerned, our function was, of course, the movement of cargo and personnel to the ports, the outloading of ships, and the input control of cargo into the aerial ports. MAC, on the other hand, had the function, from the aerial ports, of moving the cargo and personnel to destinations, and MSC (Military Sealift Command), which was then MSTS (Military Sea Transportation Service), had the function of controlling the movement of the oceangoing carriers from port to destination. Insofar as the strategic ability aspects of the problem were concerned, we had no problem with that at all. We had the capability, in the United States, the commercial capability in transportation, to perform the mission with no problems, without impinging on the requirements for the domestic side of transportation requirements. And we had no real problem in having adequate air support because, in addition to commercial transportation, MAC would draw in National Guard and Reserve units to support their mission when the requirements increased considerably. And, of course, the main cargo function they had was to deal with high-priority cargo that had to, in a short time (fuse), be flown over to destination. We outloaded a lot of high-priority cargo that was too large

for military air transportation and we would always top-load that type of cargo. I would think, though, that if you're looking to the future and the functioning of the three commands, that you could simplify the relationships considerably if you considered that the operators-in this case the operators being MSC, oceangoing operators; and MAC, (which are) aerial operators---were restricted to the operations of the total air function. By this, I mean that they should not be in the traffic management area of the movement of cargo and personnel, it being a traffic management function which is the main function of MTMTS, or was. MTMTS should have control of all commercial transportation, instead of having three agents of the government dealing with the commercial transportation. As you know, within the United States, MTMTS, or MTMC, handles all types of transportation, aerial and everything else. I would suggest that as something worth some study from the point of view of efficiency, unity of command, and also from the point of view of eliminating duplication of effort.

CPT Eicher: As we've talked here, it sounds to me, like the Army is the biggest beneficiary of all this ability. In other words, they're the biggest user of the things that we're moving either by air, by sea, and through the ports of MTMC. So, it certainly stands to reason that, since the Army is the beneficiary of this, to have one of the other services controlling them certainly is not the way, I wouldn't think, that we'd want to do that.

MG Lane: That's why I would suggest that beneficiary is not necessarily the word I would suggest. I think you're right. When you start talking about strategic mobility, you're talking about an Army force if you're talking about a large operation. Generally, the Navy and the Air Force can move their own troops and equipment anywhere they want with their own organic equipment. So, when you're bringing in the requirements for utilizing commercial transportation in the United States, you're really talking about moving Army forces overseas. I think that if you simplified that movement, as I just suggested, I think that there would be many benefits from that. Now, you can go back to World War II when the Army had complete control from the point of origin, the United States, to destination, in Europe, of all transportation.

As time went on, and we started reorganizing, we started splitting that up. I think that one of the problems you've got today is a result of all those reorganizations where we've taken something that should be controlled by one agency and we're splitting it up for purposes of equality. I see no reason why commercial transportation should be an MTMTS responsibility through a port, and then go to another agency for an ocean voyage, and then come back through the port of destination to become an MTMTS responsibility again. I think that slows your operation, but this seems to be the trend in our joint actions. We get that in the logistics field, where you also have it, and I think it's a real problem in the command field, in small operations. It appears that if you have a real operation, that is sizeable, that those problems sort of disappear. They really cause problems in the small operations.

CPT Eicher: Does MTMC have responsibility for ports overseas? My thought was that MTMC was responsible for CONUS movement of transportation and ports of

debarkation (embarkation). Is that incorrect? Is MTMC responsible, also, for ports in the area that we're deploying to?

MG Lane: You're exactly correct. When MTMC was formed, that was the condition, but in recent years they have the responsibility for ports of debarkation and onward movement, but it's developing on a port-by-port basis.

CPT Eicher: I don't know if you're familiar with Vice Admiral Kent Carroll who is now, well, in 1981, he assumed command of the Military Sealift Command and, of course, in 1982, he was talking to a Congressional subcommittee trying to highlight a decline in the US sealift capability. When we talk about strategic mobility, it sounds like the bulk of things we're talking about moving... it's going to have to be sealift that gets it there, and Admiral Carroll has said that our sealift is our 'Achilles heel'. Do you agree that we have a problem in that area, and how do we allow that to happen?

MG Lane: I agree. I don't think there's any question that that is a problem if, again, you're talking about a large operation, which I presume was the basis of the question. You have to look into the concept of what our sealift capability is. What it consists of is a few organic cargo ships under the control of the Navy. You have the National Defense Reserve Fleet placed offshore, like at Eustis and elsewhere, which consist principally of World War II ships placed in storage, that are rusting out very, very rapidly at this point in time, if they haven't all rusted out, and that are being replaced, but at a very, very slow rate, from commercial ships that are laid up. Another thing that mitigates against us is the fact that the whole system of oceangoing cargo shipping has changed rapidly in the last few years from freight-box ships to containers, containerization. Most of those ships, container ships, now are relatively new and not ready to be retired in the reserve fleets.

CPT Eicher: One point I'd like to ask you, I hate to interrupt you, but in my reading I'm hearing that container ships are going to a non-selfsustaining type ships. In other words, they require crane operations at port facilities in order to be able to unload them. Why is that happening? Why are we going to non-selfsustaining when we go to container?

MG Lane: Well, it's not that the military are doing it, it's the commercial business, and what it means is that you put a couple of heavy cranes on a ship and you immediately reduce the capability for moving your containers. It's a question of dollars and cents. I think that if you want to get around that problem there's only one way to do it and that is for the U.S. government to subsidize the fact that we have to have cranes on these ships when you go into an objective area that doesn't have port facilities. I see a logical solution to that and I would think that some of the money that MARAD (Maritime Administration) spends subsidizing ships and ship operations could well be spent for that purpose. Another thing, you know, that has happened in recent years, is that we used to have a troop fleet we were using around the world, and that's practically disappeared in recent years. All of these things, to me, mean that we are going to have to start spending some money in supporting a minimum of a fleet of cargo ships for military purposes.

CPT Eicher: We talked about the Vietnam period, for instance 1968, which was considered the peak sealift period. Did you encounter any... I believe you said you did not encounter any problems in finding shipping at that time, so, it was still...we still had a capability at that time that was substantial.

MG Lane: Yes. That's true. We had minor problems from time to time. We have had ships that would have foreign crews in them that, after we had outloaded the ship, the crew would refuse to operate the ship because either they were not in sympathy with what was going on in Vietnam, or they didn't want to get involved in that type of a fracas. This created lots of problem for MSC because any time that happened it meant that they had to scurry around the country to various ports and fly individuals to the port concerned just to be able to get the ship moving again. That happened quite frequently. But, capability was not one of my problems.

CPT Eicher: If this trend continues, we're going to get to a point where we may be relying are and more on foreign flag ships, and that will be even more of a problem.

MG Lane: Of course, I think that one of the things you have to take into consideration when you talk about our capability and our foreign flags is that there are a tremendous number of ships, foreign flag ships, that are American-owned, and they are only foreign flags so that they don't have to meet the Coast Guard requirements in the United States. And I don't think there's any question that those are available to the United States any time we really want them. Another thing we ought to consider is the legalization of our allies shipping. If we can't get an agreement from them for that purpose, we really ought to do something about it because if you consider the input of the United States government into the welfare of all of our allies, and to have them resist the utilization of some of their resources I think is something that ought to be taken pretty seriously by the diplomats.

CPT Eicher: What other steps have we taken to try and stop this trend; in other words, to try and build our MSC capability back? We talked about U.S. shipping. Do we have agreements with US shippers as far as getting ships to haul military cargoes?

MG Lane: Yes. The MSC has agreements with the owners of liners and, I guess it varies with the company, but I think the objective is to get these liners to provide the government with about fifty percent of their capability in the event of an emergency. This is done by agreement with each of the liners (carriers) concerned. I believe that, probably, as a result of that agreement, that the liners, then, are given a little preferential treatment insofar as the movement of military cargo is concerned in peacetime . Of course, it's a voluntary program. In the event of an all-out emergency, you just do what you have to do and you take over any capability you want, but until you come to an all-out war you don't have the privilege of doing that.

CPT Eicher: Are these agreements working? Are we getting committment from the carriers, or do we have problem with them, a conflict of profit versus working for the government?

MG Lane: I think they responded very well during the Vietnam period of time, but I think what happens, it just depends on the status of the economy at the time that the call-up is required. If you're in the throes of a depression, and your commerce is at a low ebb, then generally you'll find them offering these liners to you very quickly. On the other hand, if you're in a very prosperous era, and they're working to capacity to meet their commercial requirements, it's very difficult then to have them break off from meeting those requirements to serve the military because when they go to reinstitute their liners to the original destinations they will have lost an awful lot of demand and they have to build-up their business again.

CPT Eicher: Do we also have programs to acquire ships for the MSC that are committed to the military? I think I've heard of chartered programs where they offer to build a ship and then charter it back. It's kind of like an aircraft. You sell the guy an airplane and then rent it back from him to finance it. Do we have programs like that to increase our sealift capability?

MG Lane: Yes, that's happened in the past. I believe that's happened with respect to roll-on/roll-off ships. The Army has always been a big pusher of roll-on/roll-off ships. I think, probably, one of the first proponents utilizing roll-on/roll-off ships for military purposes was General Frank Besson, who was always a very strong advocate of that. Of course, the reason is very obvious. You land in an objective area with your cargo ready to move with no additional preparation necessary. I think the British have a pretty good system for taking care of their military, and that is that when they subsidize a ship the government utilizes that ship for a year or two, because of the subsidy, and then it goes back into commercial operation. That used to happen with passenger ships as well as cargo ships.

CPT Eicher: It just seems strange to me, I guess, that a maritime nation, which it seems that we are, we're rather isolated here, and we're trading with other people around the world, that our shipping is in decline. Can you think of some reasons why that's happening? Why are we letting that happen to us?

MG Lane: I think there are really two reasons. Basically, I think, it's a question of dollars and cents. The thing that causes that is that in the construction of ships in the United States, in addition to the high wages we have to pay people to work on ships, you have Coast Guard restrictions that have to be built into the ships which, again, increases the cost of the ships, and shipping. Then you look at the foreign operators. They have cheap labor to build the ship, and the operation of the ship is by very low-scale paid sailors, so, when you add all this up, it's hard to be competitive. The only way you can break even is by increasing the price of movement of the cargo, and the shippers are just going to go to the lowest priced operator. I think that's one of the problems that we have in this country. Of course, MARAD is subsidizing ship construction, and it subsidizes the operation of ships to try to meet the low-cost overseas operations, but it's pretty hard to do it when the rest of the world is operating at a very, very low cost basis.

CPT Eicher: You mentioned Britain and subsidizing shipbuilding. How do other countries manage this problem? Certainly, there are a lot of maritime countries that are not actually just controlling their state-owned shipping. How do they maintain a shipping capability?

MG Lane: I suspect that most other countries are actually state-owned shipping companies and oceangoing carriers. Obviously, (if) the Russians can do it, and they are undercutting everybody in the world, I guess, for that reason. I think that that's another side to the coin, you see, when you get a state-owned operation of that nature, the state makes a decision that they want to move their cargo even though they lose money on the operation. And when you're a commercial operator, you can't operate on that basis, so you're competing with the government, which is difficult for an individual corporation to do.

CPT Eicher: It looks like the only way then that we can encourage this is for our government to subsidize the ship building and the program that we're talking about and to try to get more efficient ships as we're doing it.

MG Lane: Yes, I think your last comment is a particularly good one, and that is to get more efficient ships and not just build ships the way they've always been built. Not that everything has to be a special purpose ship, but I think that we can build ships effectively for the purposes which ultimately will become national defense purposes. And that part of the building of ships certainly should become an expense of the United States government.

CPT Eicher: Do you see any progress being made by the current administration along these lines, to procure these ships?

MG Lane: Of course, I'm sure you know that they procured the SL-7 from Sealand Corporation, these fast, thousand-,container, cargo ships. An interesting thing about that, though, is that those ships were built in foreign lands. They're not US built ships. However, they are ships that are especially beneficial to the military, but not for commercial operations, because of the cost of the fuel when they're operating at high speed. However, they do certainly help meet the requirements of a short fuse in getting your initial forces to an objective area.

CPT Eicher: I guess the final question is how would you meet this -- we've defined a decline in shipping capability--how would you met this challenge for a long-term programs or is there somewhere (something) we could fall back on if we needed it? How would you meet that challenge of declining shipping?

MG Lane: Of course, the answer is you build more ships, which is an expensive proposition, but I think, just for a start, I would say that the Department of the Defense has to acquaint the Congress, and I mean every individual Congressman, with the requirement to have the shipping that we need in the event of an emergency. I don ‘t think the Congress understands the problem. I think everybody in the military does, but

usually they'll send the military to talk to other military people and tell them about our problems. This is a national defense problem and we have problem enough with the Congress when you start talking about the shooting part of a war, which they don't understand because, in the first place, they don't understand the objectives of the Soviet Union. Then, when you start talking about a fleet that you want, really, on a reserve basis, I think it would be hard to get them to cut back on Social Security. It's pretty hard to get them to take money from welfare programs to help the military requirements. That's already very obvious. What you have, essentially, is you have Republicans who want to increase our defense posture, and then you have Democrats that want to keep increasing the welfare posture. And I think they have to be educated and, at some point in tine, they're going to have to think about the welfare of the United States, instead of re-elections. And I think they have to be told so. As a starter, I think that's necessary. Then, I would go ahead, and you'd have to subsidize the building of ships that you need and lease them to the operators, the converse of what we're doing now; having them build the ships and we lease them in a good many cases. I don't see any other way that you can have an adequate posture because the requirements of your commercial transportation and those of the military are quite different and don't necessarily support each other.

CPT Eicher: Do you have any other comments that you'd like to make on the sealift capability, or strategic ability, in general?

MG Lane: I would add, along the line we were just talking, I would say that there are a couple of other things you could do. One, of course, as you mentioned sometime ago, is to, during peacetime get your equipment somewhere near an objective area where it can be maintained, to save shipping, because there will always be a shortage of shipping in a major operation. One comment I'd make here, though, is I would think you'd have to be very, very certain that you have adequate troops to maintain the equipment in the condition to which it should be maintained. Another thing is, for quick deployment, you could outload your ships and anchor the ships somewhere near your objective area, providing you have some idea of what the objective area might be. With your equipment loaded, you could move from time to time to areas, locations. But again you have the same problem. If those ships are just anchored someplace and equipment is in storage, and both the ship unloading capability and the equipment in storage isn't maintained properly, you have defeated the purpose. You have actually wasted the transportation. Of course, the British are very astute in showing us how we ought to utilize our resources, or how they should utilize our resources. About 1948, when I was in general staff, in operations in international affairs, we had a request from the British which related to several ships we had in Baltimore Harbor, stored with wheat and sugar, which was quite an expensive proposition for storage purposes. The request came from the British that if we just shipped that over to Britain for storage, that they would take care of it for us and that would save a lot of shipping in the event of an emergency. Of course, in 1947, it looked as though it would be a long time before we'd have another emergency. You can guess who would utilize the sugar and all the wheat we stored there. This is another question of prepositioning your supplies and, of course, their reasoning was simply that if you're going to have another war it's going to be in Europe

and you're going to have, to just have the usual shortage of shipping to met your requirements.

CPT Eicher: It seems like in World War II we certainly geared-up for production of ships, for instance, among other things, but today it seem like the time factor is becoming more and more stringent and we may not have the opportunity to do that in future conflicts.

MG Lane: You're exactly right, you see, and we knew that we were going to go into Europe, but the time factor wasn't that important. Actually, we built the ships that we needed to meet the requirement. We just had to take that amount of time, and you had industries in this country that had never built a ship that were building ships, such as the Kaiser Corporation, and they become the famous Liberty ships, not known for their beauty or speed, but which did the job, which was carrying cargo.

CPT Eicher: But I would imagine that just to build a fleet of those ships now, new ones, even just simple somthing to float equipment over there, would be cost prohibitive, especially if they're just sitting.

MG Lane: That's true.